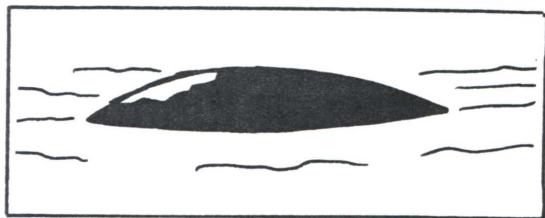


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BEHEMOTH



● Loch Ness: Andreas Trottmann has sent me the sketch of his Nessie sighting of May 11, 1988, in Urquhart Bay. At 7.10 in the morning he observed, from Strone, a 4 - 5m long, 60 - 70 cm wide dark gray hump with a large white patch in the front portion. He emphasizes that the sighting was only of short duration (2 sec), but

that he knows the Loch well. This is a very interesting sighting. Mr Trottmann also informed me that the controversial "Braham Seer" Nessie reference first appeared in the Glasgow Herald on Sept 5, 1984, in a report about the Vladivar Vodka trap expedition.

● Nahuel Huapi: Fortean Times 52 refers to the monster. Like most other 'monster lakes', Nahuel Huapi is also a fortean hotspot. In August 1817, two Argentinian adventurers killed a pterodactyl on the lake (U. Dunkel: Abenteuer mit Seeschlangen. Kreuz: Stuttgart 1960: 43 - 50); a ghost plane over San Carlos de Bariloche was spotted on July 22, 1968 (Keel: Trojan Horse. Abacus: London 1973: 123); lastly, most monster lakes have associated 'sunken cities' or 'lost civilisations': Dr Oswaldo Menghin found 'prehistoric petroglyphs' around the lake (M. Homet: Auf den Spuren der Sonnengötter. Limes: Wiesbaden 1978: 301).

● Saone: A 2 m/7ft shark was found dead on the bank of the French river Saone near Lyon - 400 km inland! Experts believe it is a hoax, the shark would never have reached the spot on its own (Rheinpfalz, 6.9.). Wait...is this just foaflore? In July 1974, 2 fishermen allegedly caught a 2m-shark near Varades in the Loire - 120 km inland (ABC, Madrid, 14.7.1974, p.44c). J J Barloy checked this one for me and found it was a hoax. As Fortean Times already noted (46, p.28) in 1986, the Saone has a reputation of "giant fish".

● Australia: The fight of the Australian aborigines for the nest of the Wagyl, the mythical rainbow serpent, in Perth, continues. Early in October, police detained 54 protesters, including two black leaders and several white supporters. While the government plans to build a culture centre on the site, the aborigines want to preserve the sacred place as a park. Wagyl, the giant water serpent, created rivers and lakes in dreamtime (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 10.10., p.52f). According to the Naturwissenschaftliche Rundschau (August 89), scientists have discovered a fossil 8 m lizard in Australia. Could this be the giant monitor lizards farmers keep on seeing down under?

● Bibliography: - giant catfish (1.96 m) caught near Cloppenburg, W Germany (Rheinpfalz, 1.8.). - Sir Peter Scott, monster champion and wildlife expert, is dead (The Times, 31.8., p.1, 10 & 12). - Strange 4 has been published, full with good stuff, especially a very interesting review of Meurger's book. - a 17ft python serpent caught at Miami, Florida (Arab News, 8.10., p.20e).

ISIS

● Owlman: The original sirens were bird-women, just like the Cornish owlman is a cocktail between owl and man. According to Sean Wood (Just my Imagination, Great Outdoors, June 89: 32 - 34), an owlman was also reported from the Halfren Forest in Powys, Wales, near the source of the river Severn. He also mentions "the Clifden Nerman" who "was last seen in 1935."

● Aquatic Ape: F de Sarre's speculation on the first "aquatic homunculus" who left the sea to be the father of all land animals: see Bipedia 3, 1989: 17 ff. Sarre has also written a book (in French) on his theory: "Des véritables Origines de l'homme", 102 pp, \$ 14). I have a copy, it surely is a good read, with questions like dino-human coexistence, aquatic apes, merfolk etc. answered. I disagree with most what Sarre says, but he is a sincere and thorough researcher and deserves to be read. Write to: CERBI, BP 65, 06022 Nice cedex, FRANCE. "Initial bipedalism" was also mentioned in recent issues of Science Frontiers and INFO Journal.

LEVIATHAN

● Megamouth: A fourth megamouth was washed ashore at a sandy beach at Hamamatsu in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, on Jan 23. It was an adult male, 4 m in length. The body was later washed back to sea and is now lost, but some good photographs were taken (Kazuhiro Nakaya: Discovery of Megamouth Shark from Japan, Japan. J. Ichthyol. 36 (1), 1989: 144 - 146). The article was supplied by Mr Gerard van Leusden, Utrecht, who comments: "The animal seems not to be as rare as has been thought".

● Alaska: Scientists in a sub 32 km west of Baranof Island videotaped a cow drifting 210 m below the surface. It looked like recently dead. This was reported in a number of papers, Arab News, 3.9.,p.16f; Saudi Gazette, 3.9., p.6a; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 4.9.,p.8de - aquatic deep sea cows?

KRAKEN

● Bermuda: In May 1988, a so-called "blob" was washed ashore at Bermuda. The ISC Newsletter, Autumn 88, compares this blob to similar strandings in Tasmania (1960 - 62) and New Zealand (1968) - both classics. The newsletter speculates the blobs may be the remains of giant octopi. The traditional scientific explanation is that they are masses of whale blubber.

USOS

● Japan: According to a news report by Theo Koll in the German Tagesthemen news programme on Sept 18, a town on the Japanese westcoast, Akui (?), is becoming a new "UFO town". This summer, there were over 40 sightings, according to Kano Yosen (?), a priest and UFO specialist. Some 4 photos were shown (looked like fakes), and a film was taken (moon out of focus?). Akui now calls itself "UFO Town", a "Flying Disc" pub sells "UFO menus" and "UFOBurgers". 32 % of the Japanese believe UFOs do exist, 6 % are sure they do. There is even a "UFO party" in Tokyo which took part in the general elections. Most sightings, it seems, take place over the sea.

● Soviet subs: In Sept, a new secret Soviet sub was spied during an US mission from Andoy Airbase in the North Atlantic. This sub cannot be detected by electronic buoys. Yet according to US diplomatic sources, there has been "some exaggeration" in previous concerns about Baltic USOs in the early 80s. The Swedes still reckon with 3 - 5 incursions per year for which they claim to have "hard evidence" (Int. Herald Tribune, 18.9.,p.1 & 5).

● Atazar Reservoir, Spain. In this lake near Madrid, teenage UFO fans have observed dozens of UFOs, USOs and humanoids, including abductions, from 1979 to 81. (Cuadernos de Ufología, 2: 5, April 1989: 85 - 95).

CRYPTOZOOLOGY

● Dr Roy McDiarmid, investigating Cerro Neblina, Venezuela (site of dino encounters) has discovered 17 new species, mainly lizards and amphibians. Long report in The Times, 14.9.,p.1, which lists more recent discoveries.

● Scientists prepare the first inventory of marine invertebrates of Spain. They expect to discover many new species, but also warn that pollution may have destroyed many, too (El País, Madrid, 7.9.)p. ● Lake Bala in Wales has a relic from the Ice Age, the Gwyniad, a fish only to be found in this Welsh monster lake (which has also a sunken city legend). Peter Ogden reports on it and attempts at preservation in Snowdonia Star (tourist newspaper, 1989, p. 13). ● Several yetis were repeatedly seen near Engels on the Lower Volga River, USSR, in September (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 30.9.,p.14e, and others).

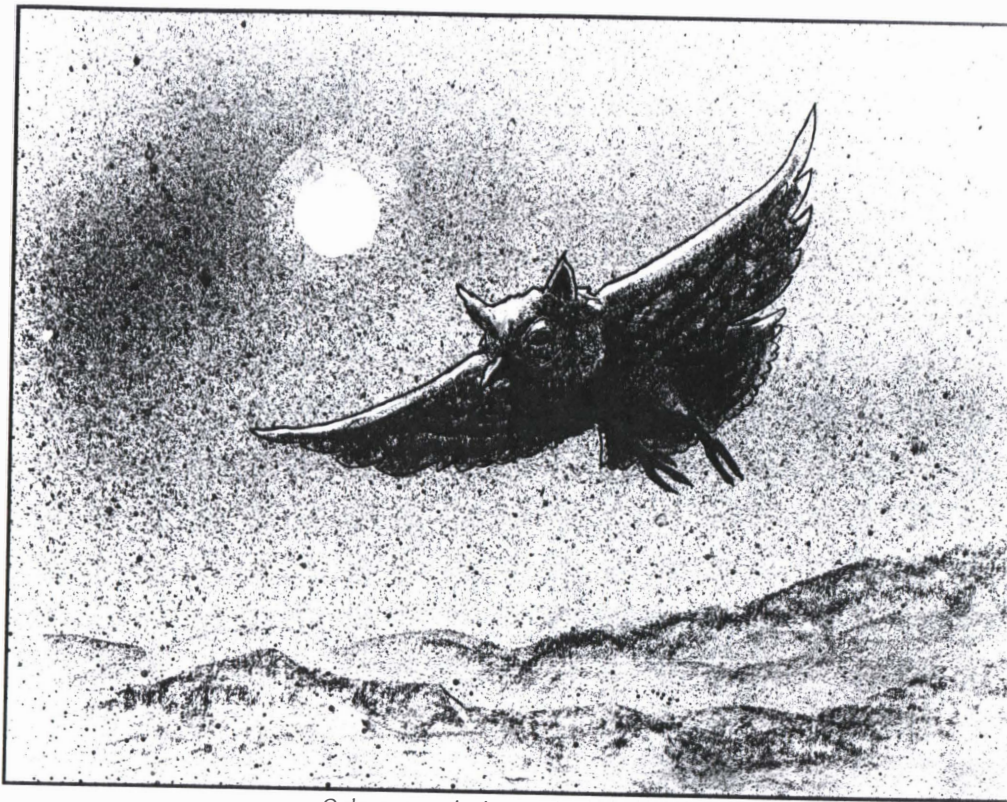
MARINE LIFE

● whales: - 56 pilot whales stranded in New Zealand (The Times, 25.8.,p.7h). - baby sperm whale beached near Galveston, Texas, on Sept 2 (Arab News, 7.9.,p.16). - two rare "beaked whales" beached 25 days before Sept 9 (Saudi Gazette, p.5a) in California. - 5 sperm whales stranded at Prince Edward Islands, Canada - they were towed back to sea and saved (Bild, 3.10.) - baby pilot whale stranded at Perth, Australia (Saudi Gazette, 8.10.,p.4d).

● sharks: - baby whale shark caught in the Gulf of Oman (Saudi Gazette, 31.8.,p.2; Arab News, 31.8.,p.3). - sharks observed off Sicily (Rheinpfalz, 17.8.). - shark attack off Sta. Barbara, Cal. (Saudi Gazette, 7.9.,p.4a)

● Coelacanth: Tauchen (10/ 89,p.64) has an article on the possible existence of coelacanths on the Balearic Islands, Spain. Hans Fricke mentions several sightings in Galicia, Greece and Mallorca. In 1949, scales of a coelacanth caught off Florida were presented to a museum - proof that these strange fish exist there. Japanese zoos want to catch coelacanths, which possibly endangers the whole species (The Times, 28.9.,p.18).

Tanks to Michel Raynal, Andreas Trottmann and (as always) to G. van Leusden



Owlmen: reported sightings in Cornwall and Wales
(all drawings by Tony Hewson).

Just My Imagination

Or is it? Sean Wood delves into the subject of outdoor mythology and supernatural beasts

AFTER attending the annual conference of the International Society of Cryptozoology two years ago in Edinburgh, my imagination was filled with vivid pictures of Bigfoot, Nessie, living dinosaurs and of course the abominable snowman.

As Chris Bonington was climbing in the Menlungtse area at the time, I thought it a good idea to write a story for one of the national newspapers; so I phoned the British Mountaineering Council in Manchester and asked if Bonington would be looking for the Yeti while he was there.

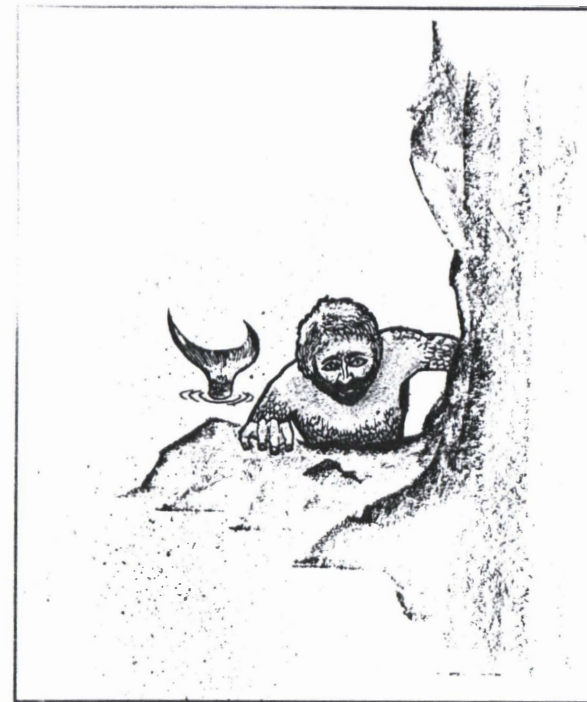
Mentioning no names, the person I spoke to said, "Oh, I don't think Mr Bonington would be interested in having his name connected with that story." I felt this was

fair enough and completed the piece without using his name. However, two weeks later my incredulity knew no bound when I read the *Daily Mail* centre spread concerning Mr Bonington's sighting of Yeti footprints!

The moral of the tale is probably, write what you want without asking, or like the cryptozoologist, say what you think without worrying what people might think of you. For example, the man who stood up at the conference and exclaimed, "... If man can be seven feet tall, who is to say that there are not seven foot grass snakes in the South of England?" Or how about the American who professed to know that Nessie was in another dimension, and only popped into ours now and again!

Papers presented at the two-day conference were on subjects as varied as new species of cheetah and the possible existence of prehistoric tree-climbing marsupials in eastern Australia. What intrigued me most was that you could not really say they were wrong, and until there was proof otherwise, they could be right.

Now you may be wondering why or earth I should be writing about these matters in TGO. Well the answer is simple: most readers are in a unique position to cast some light on the mysterious creatures of Britain's cryptozoological bestiary, because they spend a great deal of time outdoors.



The Clifden Mermaid: A figment of Irish blarney?

Many of the strange creatures that have been spotted over the years have manifested themselves for walkers and climbers in some of our best loved walking areas. So if you have not already seen them, read on and you'll know where to look in future. The first day of the conference was devoted entirely to the Loch Ness Monster, our most famous mythological animal.

LOOKING FOR NESSIE

His or her home is about 25 miles long and a mile wide in places. A very enjoyable week or more could be spent walking around the loch with occasional diversions to take in the delights of Glen Affric to the west and the Monadhliath Mountains to the east, before continuing with the circumnavigation.

Keep a sharp watch for any stray ripple or disturbance in the water, and don't forget to have a camera ready; as yet there are no definitive photographs of the monster.

The picture that started it all in recent times was the so-called Surgeon Photograph, taken by a doctor while on holiday in the 1930s. His picture shows what appears to be a long neck and small head stretched out of the water. The doctor's picture was used in a wave analysis experiment by a Canadian

scientist, who estimated that the creature's neck was about ten feet long.

Two of the latest photographs taken from Urquhart Castle by Anthony Sheils in 1977 and from Achnahanne by a woman on a cycling trip in 1983, show remarkable similarity to the doctor's original, which could make a very plausible argument for the monster's existence.

American lawyer Dr Robert Rines, took the famous "flipper" photograph in 1972, which resulted in the monster being described as a prehistoric plesiosaur and being given the scientific name *Nessiteros rhombopteryx* which, translated from the Greek, means "the wonder of Ness with the diamond fin."

This conclusion was accredited by naturalist Sir Peter Scott, but journalists had a field day in the press when they discovered the name was an anagram of "Monster hoax by Sir Peter S", claiming there was more chance of the monster existing than the anagram being pure coincidence.

However, Nicholas Witchell, the BBC newsman and author of the best book on the subject *The Loch Ness Story*, points to an anagram to satisfy the believer: "Yes both pix are monster — R", (R for Robert Rines). The cynics and the logical always lean toward natural explanations for the sightings: dead trees, dead sheep, otters, or

even swimming deer and water birds. Meanwhile, the legend lives on. There are many other pretenders to Nessie's unique position as the king or queen of Britain's mystery animals.

BEASTS BELOW THE WAVES

Not least the other lake and sea monsters, like Morag in the brooding Loch Morar, or the 30 foot sea beast with a camel's head, giraffe's neck and a tail covered with long hairs! It was spotted in the Firth of Clyde in August 1953. Then there's Morgawr, who has been seen many times around the coast of Cornwall since she first decided to show herself near Pendennis Point in September 1975.

Terrestrial creatures are just as plentiful, and luckily for the inquisitive walker, they are purported to be found in some beautiful countryside. So if you're inclined to search for them, you're assured of a good walk.

Over the past ten years the reports of large cats on the loose have increased at an amazing rate, and now range up and down the country from Surrey to the Northern Highlands. Di Francis in her book *Cat Country* puts forward the theory that there's a fairly large cat unique to these shores that has gone undetected for centuries, surviving all over Britain through stealth and a secretive lifestyle.

Whether you give any credibility to this idea is another thing. You might take the view that any cat seen has been an escapee, like the recent South American cat shot on Exmoor, or the full grown puma that was trapped in October 1980 at Cannich near Inverness by farmer Ted Noble; or even the cat with grey fur, black spots and long, pointed ears like a lynx, seen at Churchstoke and christened The Powys Beast.

Black cats seem to have the edge in terms of definitive existence, because several have been shot in the Moray region of the Highlands, one of which was displayed at the Edinburgh conference by Di Francis. This specimen looked like a black or melanistic Scottish wildcat and here lies the dilemma. Are they wildcats, or has cross breeding with domestic cats resulted in the colour; or perhaps they are living fossils?

In Warwickshire a resident of Long Marston saw a jet-black animal with a long bushy tail catch a moorhen and make off into the night. He may have been tempted to follow, but probably had heard the tale of nearby Meon Hill and thought better of it.

On this hill in 1885, Charles Walton claimed he saw a ghostly black dog nine times and was eventually murdered there in

Just My Imagination

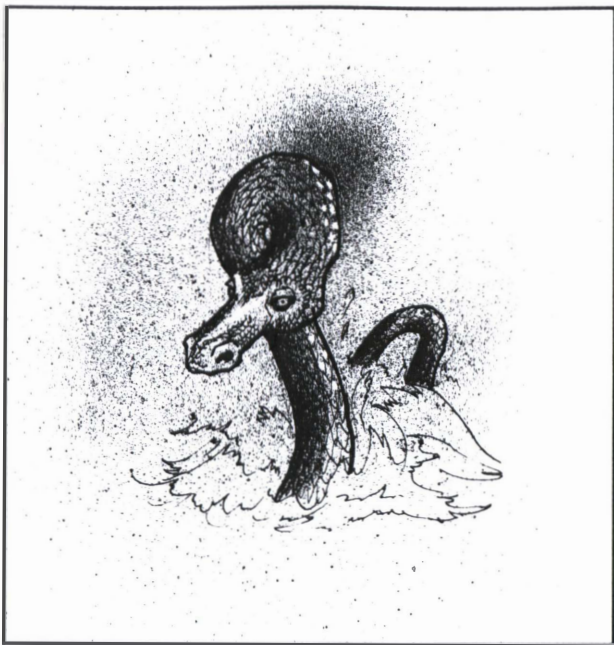
very mysterious circumstances 60 years later. At this point I feel it prudent to advise you that cryptozoological orientated searches are done at your own risk!

FLYING OWLMEN

For example, if on one of the coastal walks around Rosemullion Head in Cornwall be sure to look up, for it was in the grounds of nearby Mawnan Church that Sally Chapman and her friend saw the owlman . . . "It was like a big owl with pointed ears, as big as a man. The eyes were red and glowing. At first we thought it was somebody dressed up and playing a joke trying to scare us. We laughed at it, then it went up in the air and we both screamed," said Sally.

Similar owlmen have been reported from the Hailren Forest in Powys. It is especially worth looking for them here, because you combine your search with some strenuous trekking through the trees to the source of the River Severn.

Of all the puzzling animals, my personal favourite has to be the Clitden Merman who was last seen in 1935. Clitden is a pocket-sized town in Connemara, Co Galway which has surrounding it some of the most scenic walking country in Europe.



Nessie: Best known of our outdoor beasts.



The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdui.

Unlike most strange encounters, the sex of the merman was obviously ascertained, as has that of his possible relatives off the west coast of Scotland; although these have all been mermaids. One unfortunate mermaid so frightened islanders on Benbecula in 1830 that she was stoned to death and buried in an unmarked grave above the shoreline.

Seventy years later Alexander Gunn was walking with his big dog at Sandwood in Sutherland, an area of remarkable natural beauty, when they came across a mermaid sitting on a rock. According to Mr Gunn she had curly, reddish-yellow hair, greenish-blue eyes and arched eyebrows. Perhaps his Victorian decency prevented any description of her upper body being recorded. However he did tell us that when she frowned at him he ran off as quickly as he could.

While on the subject of humanesque entities, it is fitting to conclude on our own yeti-like being, The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdui. He has been responsible for scaring several climbers since 1890, when Professor Norman Collie heard "crunching footsteps" following him.

Professor Collie panicked when he heard the noise behind him and fled blindly for four or five miles until he reached the comparative safety of Rothiemurchus Forest below. It was probably a good thing he didn't turn around as he fled because the Big Grey Man has been described as a muscular brute of up to 25 feet tall.

But don't let this or any other incident put you off. And remember when you're out walking — please make a cryptozoologist happy — get a picture! ■